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IN THE CLAIMS

Amended claims follow:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for maintaining handheld computers at a location remote from a home maintenance node containing a maintenance database for at least one of the handheld computers and connected to the remote location through a network, the method comprising:

connecting one of the handheld computers to a maintenance node;

detecting whether the maintenance node is the home maintenance node for the handheld computer;

locating the home maintenance node for the handheld computer if the connected maintenance node is not the home maintenance node;

opening a maintenance session between the handheld computer and the home maintenance node; and

performing maintenance on the handheld computer;

wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer involves scanning data on the handheld for viruses;

wherein scanning data on the handheld computer for viruses includes reading said data from the handheld computer, storing said data at least temporarily on a computer system, scanning said data for viruses with a virus detection program, cleaning said data

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of viruses identified during the scanning, and updating the data on the handheld based on results of the scanning utilizing the virus detection program;

wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer involves running diagnostics on the handheld computer;

wherein the diagnostics include an operation selected from the group consisting of checking for broken shortcuts, checking for missing files, checking for temporary files that can be deleted, checking a registry area, deleting games, and deleting proprietary information that employees should not have installed on the handheld computer.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein there is a one-to-one relationship between the handheld computers and the maintenance nodes such that each of the maintenance nodes represent the home maintenance node for only one handheld computer.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein a central maintenance node is the home maintenance node for all of the handheld computers.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein connecting the handheld computer to the maintenance node comprises connecting a serial line between the handheld computer and a personal computer.

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5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein connecting a serial line comprises placing the handheld computer in a cradle connected to the serial line.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein detecting whether the maintenance node is the home maintenance node comprises comparing an identifier for the handheld computer with an identifier stored in a maintenance database of the home maintenance node.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein locating the home maintenance node for the handheld computer comprises connecting to a network coupled to a plurality of home maintenance nodes.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein the network is an enterprise network.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein locating the home maintenance node for the handheld computer comprises connecting to a network coupled to a central maintenance node containing maintenance databases for each of the handheld computers.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein opening a maintenance session between the handheld computer and the home maintenance node comprises running a maintenance manager stored on the home maintenance node.

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11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer comprises synchronizing data stored on the handheld computer with data stored on a maintenance database located in the home maintenance node.
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer comprises updating software installed on the handheld computer.
16. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer comprises deleting unauthorized software from the handheld computer.
17. (Currently Amended) A system for maintaining a plurality of handheld computers configured for connection to a network having a plurality of maintenance nodes coupled thereto, each of said plurality of handheld computers having a home maintenance node, the system comprising:

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for each handheld computer, a maintenance database stored on the home maintenance node and associated with the handheld computer; and

a maintenance manager installed on each of the maintenance nodes and operable to detect whether the maintenance node is the home maintenance node for the handheld computer connected to the maintenance node, locate the home maintenance node for the handheld computer if the maintenance node is not the home maintenance node, open a maintenance session across the network between the located home maintenance node and the connected handheld computer, and perform a maintenance operation using the maintenance database stored on the home maintenance node;

wherein performing a maintenance operation on the handheld computer involves scanning data on the handheld for viruses;

wherein scanning data on the handheld computer for viruses includes reading said data from the handheld computer, storing said data at least temporarily on a computer system, scanning said data for viruses with a virus detection program, cleaning said data of viruses identified during the scanning, and updating the data on the handheld based on results of the scanning utilizing the virus detection program;

wherein performing a maintenance operation on the handheld computer involves running diagnostics on the handheld computer;

wherein the diagnostics include an operation selected from the group consisting of checking for broken shortcuts, checking for missing files, checking for temporary files that can be deleted, checking a registry area, deleting games, and deleting proprietary information that employees should not have installed on the handheld computer.

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18. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein there is a one-to-one relationship between the handheld computers and the maintenance nodes such that each of the maintenance nodes represent the home maintenance node for only one handheld computer.
19. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein a central maintenance node is the home maintenance node for all of the handheld computers.
20. (Original) The system of claim 19 wherein the central maintenance node is a server.
21. (Original) The system of claim 19 wherein the central maintenance node is connected to the Internet.
22. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the handheld computer is connected to the maintenance node through a high-speed communications interface.
23. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 22 wherein the handheld computer is connected to the maintenance node through a communication link ~~serial line~~.

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24. (Original) The system of claim 23 wherein the serial line is connected to a cradle configured to hold the handheld computer.
25. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the network is an enterprise network.
26. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the maintenance manager is configured to synchronize data stored on the handheld computer with data stored on the maintenance database located in the home maintenance node.
27. (Cancelled)
28. (Cancelled)
29. (Cancelled)
30. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the maintenance manager is configured to update software installed on the handheld computer.
31. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the maintenance manager is configured to delete unauthorized software from the handheld computer.

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32. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for maintaining handheld computers at a location remote from a home maintenance node containing a maintenance database for at least one of the handheld computers and connected to the remote location through a network, the product comprising:

computer code that creates a communication link between one of the handheld computers and a maintenance node;

computer code that detects whether the maintenance node is the home maintenance node for the handheld computer;

computer code that locates the home maintenance node for the handheld computer if the connected maintenance node is not the home maintenance node;

computer code that opens a maintenance session between the handheld computer and the home maintenance node;

computer code that performs maintenance on the handheld computer; and

a computer readable medium that stores said computer codes;

wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer involves scanning data on the handheld for viruses;

wherein scanning data on the handheld computer for viruses includes reading said data from the handheld computer, storing said data at least temporarily on a computer system, scanning said data for viruses with a virus detection program, cleaning said data of viruses identified during the scanning, and updating the data on the handheld based on results of the scanning utilizing the virus detection program;



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wherein performing maintenance on the handheld computer involves running diagnostics on the handheld computer;

wherein the diagnostics include an operation selected from the group consisting of checking for broken shortcuts, checking for missing files, checking for temporary files that can be deleted, checking a registry area, deleting games, and deleting proprietary information that employees should not have installed on the handheld computer.

33. (Original) The computer product of claim 32 wherein the computer readable medium is selected from the group consisting of CD-ROM, floppy disk, tape, flash memory, system memory, hard drive, and a data signal embodied in a carrier wave.

34. (Original) The computer product of claim 32 wherein there is a one-to-one relationship between the handheld computers and the maintenance nodes such that each of the maintenance nodes represent the home maintenance node for only one handheld computer.

35. (Original) The computer product of claim 32 wherein a central maintenance node is the home maintenance node for all of the handheld computers.

36. (Cancelled)

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37. (Cancelled)

38. (Original) The computer program product of claim 32 further comprising computer code that identifies software installed on the handheld computer, transfers updated versions of the software from a server connected to the network, and updates software installed on the handheld computer.

39. (New) The system of claim 23, wherein the communication link is selected from the group consisting of a serial line, a dial-up line, a network, and a wireless connection.

40. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the diagnostics include checking for broken shortcuts, checking for missing files, checking for temporary files that can be deleted, checking a registry area, deleting games, and deleting proprietary information that employees should not have installed on the handheld computer.

41. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the maintenance database contains information on the handheld computer including a personal calendar, contacts, tasks, a list of software and corresponding versions installed on the handheld computer, and a history of diagnostics and repairs for the handheld computer.

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42. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the maintenance manager performs functions including displaying advertisements and upgrade offers based on applications installed on the handheld computer.
43. (New) The method of claim 3, wherein the central maintenance node includes a central maintenance manager that has access to a tracking database, a rules database, and a download database containing information to be downloaded to the handheld computer.
44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the tracking database contains problem/action information relating to different problems found and different actions taken on a plurality of the handheld computers, configuration information, and software versions contained on each handheld computer; the rules database defines preferred configurations on the handheld computers and identifies software that should not be installed on the handheld computers; and the download database includes software license information that is downloaded to the handheld computers.
45. (New) The method of claim 44, wherein the central maintenance node includes a user interface which allows a system administrator to configure and update the databases.